

John England Mansion
Near Oglethorpe,
New Castle County, Delaware

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Delaware

Historic American Buildings Survey
Weston H. Blake, District Officer
909 West St., Wilmington, Del.

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JOHN ENGLAND MANSION,
Near Ogletown, New Castle County, Delaware.

Owner: David R. Eastburn.

Date of Erection: 1747.

Present Condition: Good, but with interior alterations which are not in character of original building.

Number of Stories: Two and one half with basement.

Materials of Construction: Stone foundation, brick, Flemish bond above. Wood shingle roof.

Other Existing Records: Office of Recorder of Deeds and Register of Wills, of New Castle County, Wilmington, Delaware. J. Thomas Soharf "History of Delaware" p.916. National Society of Colonial Dames, "Some Historic Points in Delaware."

Additional Data: This house and the adjoining mill (Del- 136) are situated on part of a 600 acre tract of land purchased in 1726 by John England, and although the property passed to the possession of his brother Joseph in 1741, is familiarly known as John England's Mill and Mansion. Various sources of information establish the date of erection of the main house as 1747, and this date appears on a date stone in the north gable end. There are also records of there having been a house on the site as early as 1730, built by John England shortly after he came into possession of the tract.

The wing on the south end appears to be earlier than the main portion in which the date stone appears, and although there is no documentary evidence of this being the house built by John England, in 1730, it is believed that this wing may be the original structure.

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JOHN ENGLAND MANSION
Near Ogletown, New Castle County, Delaware.

There is quite a contrast in the character of the brickwork in the two sections of the building; that in the 1747 portion being larger than the south wing. Both have Flemish bond on the main facade but the larger bricks have black glazed headers and the smaller headers to match the rest of the brick work. The same contrast is noticed in the woodwork, both interior and exterior, where simpler details are employed in the south wing. Likewise in this wing the ceilings are lower, and these various contrasting elements tend to lead to the belief that the south wing is the older, and possibly the original dwelling.



Weston H. Blake,
District Officer

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ENGLAND-EASTBURN HOUSE

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An Addendum to
England House
Ogletton Vicinity, Delaware
in HABS Catalog (1940)

Location: 81 Red Mill Road (east side of former Ruthby Road,
just north of White Clay Creek), Newark Vicinity
(Harmony, Mill Creek Hundred), New Castle County,
Delaware.

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mrs. David R. Eastburn.

Present Use: Private residence.

Brief Statement
of Significance: An eighteenth-century brick structure which was
formerly owned by the England family and for the
past century and a quarter by the Eastburn family.
It is noted for its connections with the England
grist mill and its own interesting brick and inter-
ior details.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The house and mill are on part of a 600-acre tract of land purchased in 1726 by John England, who in 1723 had come from England to manage the Principio Iron Works in Maryland. Not later than 1734 he constructed the first dam, race, and mill on the site. The main portion of the house is dated 1747, with a southern portion possibly of an earlier date.

The house and mill remained in the possession of the England family until 1839. Since then the house has been owned by the Eastburn family, but the mill has changed hands many times.

2. Date of erection: 1747.
3. Original plans, construction: The southern portion has been dated as earlier than the main portion in which the date stone appears. Although there is no documentary evidence that any portion of this house was built by John England in 1730, it is believed that the southern wing may be the original structure. The present owner's contention that the southern section is newer than the northern section is based upon the southern section's more regular brickwork, more recent type of floor construction, and the fact that the northern brick chimney of the southern section is "battered onto" the northern section.

4. Notes on alterations and additions: The exteriors and interiors of both sections have been largely altered through the years. The large fireplace and small stairway on the south wall of the north portion were removed and a larger stairway added as well as the living room divided c. 1928. A slata roof was added over tongua-and-groove boards c. 1938. A screened porch to the north, an entrance portico, and a closed sun room to the east are more recent additions.
5. Important old views: Photograph of exterior, c. 1913, property of Mrs. David R. Eastburn, Harmony, Delaware.
- B. Historical Events Connectad with the Structure: The England-Eastburn House was associated with the England Mill nearby since the early eighteenth century. Joseph England came from Pennsylvania after the death of hia brother John in 1734. His grandson, the third Joseph England, served in tha Legislature from 1800 to 1828.

A notation in the Journal of Captain Robert Kirkwood for September 6, 1777, may pertain to this house:

"Head Quartars Wilmington Sepr 6th 1777 . . .

The Genl Officers are to meat at 5 o clock this afternoon at the Brick house by White Clay Creek & fix upon proper Picquets for the Security of the Camp . . ."

However, the reference is generally thought to be to the Boyce House on the bank of White Clay Creek.

C. Sourcea of Information:

Bennett, George F. Early Architecture of Delaware (Wilmington: Historical Press, Inc., 1932), pp. 58-59 (Pant-Eave Housa near Marshallton).

Cooch, Francis A. Little Known History of Newark, Delaware and Its Environs (Newark, Del.: Press of Kells, 1936), pp. 54, 206, 207.

Eberlein, Harold Donaldson, and Hubbard, Cortlandt V. D. Historic Houses and Buildings of Delaware (Dover: Public Archives Commission, 1962), pp. 154-155.

Eckman, Jeanette. Delaware, A Guide to tha First State (New York: The Viking Press, 1938), pp. 453-454.

Turner, Rev. Joseph Brown (ed.) The Journal and Order Book
of Captain Robert Kirkwood (Wilmington: The Historical
Society of Delaware, 1910), Part I, p. 162.

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Prepared by William B. Bassett
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
July 1965

With the co-operation of Robert L. Raley, AIA

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The structure, which retains in essence its eighteenth-century character in the brickwork and interior detail, has, however, been much altered through the years.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: A two-story, two-part structure (seven-bay front (on west) x three-bay side).
2. Foundations: Stone rubble and mortar.
3. Wall construction: Red brick laid in both Flemish and common bond. The bricks in the north portion of the structure are 8-1/2" x 2-1/2" x 4", whereas in the south portion they are 8" x 2" x 4". There is a brick water table three courses above the foundation. A large stucco date marker under a brick arch reads:

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4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: A north side screened porch and an east side glassed-in porch are recent additions.
5. Chimneys: Three red brick chimneys; the smaller middle chimney replaces larger brick chimney (c. 1928).
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Main entry (west) - pedimented porch with two columns; paneled wooden door with

three-light glass transom above. South portion (north entry on west side) - eight-paneled wooden door. South portion (south entry on west side) - eight-paneled wooden door with matched board back. 3 -

- b. Windows and shutters: Six-over-nine-light, double-hung wooden sash; wooden shutters with heart-shaped cut-outs (typical of area); no shutters on second story but one shutter dog remains on second window, north portion of west facade. No second-floor shutters show on c. 1913 photograph; many window sizes changed in twentieth century causing brick infill surrounding frames.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with gray slate; pent roof on north between second floor and attic; pent roof on west between first and second floors; former pent roof on east now gone (only joist ends (approximately 2" x 8") remain).
- b. Cornice, eaves: Wooden, molded and box.
- c. Dormers, cupolas: None.

C. Technical Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: The north portion of structure is now divided in two from north to south (formerly divided in two from east to west; east section now dining room and kitchen). The south portion of the structure is in two rooms north and south separated by one step between rooms and two steps to north portion.
- b. Second floor: The north portion has a central hall with four bedrooms and bath. The south portion has two bedrooms and stair hall and is separated from north portion by four-riser stairs.

2. Stairways:

- a. North portion: First floor to second floor--thirteen-riser wooden open-string stairway which replaced (c. 1955) the original winding stairway in southeast corner. Second floor to attic--along south wall a wooden stairway where a larger chimney had been.

- b. South portion: South section to north section--one-riser wooden stair up; south portion to north portion--two-riser wooden stair up. First floor to second floor and attic--thirteen-riser wooden enclosed winding stairway; south portion (second floor) to north portion (second floor)--four-riser wooden stair up.
- 3. Flooring: Various wooden flooring replaces former oak flooring.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster.
- 5. Doorways and doors: Wooden paneled doors and wooden frames.
- 6. Trim: Wooden chair rail at various heights (27" second floor).
- 7. Hardware: Wrought-iron thumb-latches in north portion, strap hinges; large (60 inch) swing crane in large south portion first-floor south hearth.
- 8. Lighting: Electric.
- 9. Heating:
 - a. North portion--corner fireplaces at north wall (former large walk-in hearth removed c. 1928 along south wall).
 - b. South portion--upper fireplace and lower walk-in hearth (10'-2" wide x 62" high x 36" deep) with two arched openings in rear for exterior bake ovens (28" and 23" wide). Modern heating system also.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: Gable ridges run north-south with main facade on west. The house lies between rural road approximately 30 feet to west and White Clay Creek, to which the property slopes down to the east (200 feet).
- 2. Outbuildings: Wooden shed and mill approximately 100 feet to south.
- 3. Landscaping: Low stone fence and hedge on west; lawn and garden extend approximately 100 feet to north; planted embankment garden (down) approximately 10 feet

from house on east, with brick fence and wooden gate
at southeast corner of south portion.

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